

Thresholds of Becoming

24.4. – 28.5.26



Lucca Cora Süss, Maya Hottarek, Luigi Ontani
curated by Lorenzo Emanuele Metzler

There are moments in which a house is no longer merely a place, but a state. A constellation of spaces in which time, bodies, and meanings overlap—not linearly, but in layers, like sediments of an experience that can neither be fully grasped nor completely ordered. The exhibition unfolds precisely within such a state: two solo exhibitions and a collective constellation that positions itself between them like a third, breathing organism.

In this exhibition, Villa Renata appears less as a building than as a system of transitions—an organism composed of corridors, steps, doors, and rooms. Within this architectural framework, *Thresholds of Becoming* unfolds as a choreography of liminal states.

The exhibition brings together three positions that are not defined by a shared theme, but by different modalities of becoming. Here, the bodies of work by Lucca Cora Süss and Maya Hottarek encounter one another as ideas of permeable systems. Their works speak to each other about transformation and fragility, about the uncertain and the random, about that which resists fixation.

At the center of this dynamic stands *Sans Titre* (1981) by Luigi Ontani, an image that refuses a clear reading and, precisely through this, unfolds a magnetic presence.

In this work, Luigi Ontani presents a nude, horizontally extended figure within a landscape that appears both concrete and remote. The body lies on a softly modeled, greenish surface that cannot be clearly identified as meadow, island, or shore. The surroundings are reduced to a few vegetal elements: stylized palm trees and isolated leaf forms.

The figure itself appears youthful, with delicate facial features and long blond hair that spreads out to the side across the ground. The head is slightly tilted back, the eyes closed or only half open, as if the person were in a state between sleep, ecstasy, and contemplative absorption. The pose is relaxed, almost weightless, allowing the body to appear as though suspended in a dreamlike condition.

Central to the iconographic significance of the image is the androgynous-hermaphroditic anatomy of the figure. The body unites different gendered attributions without staging them as opposites. This simultaneity is neither dramatized nor presented as a rupture; it appears as a given condition. The figure belongs to a symbolic order in which binarism loses its validity.

The sky above the scene is rendered in watery, cloud-like fields of color in which greens and blues intermingle. In the upper half of the image, a round, almost schematic disk of the moon floats. This simple, bright circle sets a cosmic accent and anchors the figure within a cyclical, nocturnal space. Here, the moon functions less as an astronomical detail than as an archetypal sign of transformation, fertility, and the rhythms of becoming.

The androgynous figure can be situated within a long tradition ranging from ancient depictions of the hermaphrodite to alchemical allegories. In alchemical imagery, the androgynous body appears as a symbol of the *coniunctio oppositorum*—a concept that understands opposites as a unity without necessarily resolving them. Ontani's image adopts this visual tradition without unequivocally affirming it.

The inclusion of the moon disk reinforces this reading and situates the figure within a cosmological framework in which the human body appears as a reflection of universal processes. Within this setting, a peculiar tension emerges between myth and observation, between dream and analysis.

The composition is marked by a striking horizontality: body, ground line, and strands of hair form parallel axes that lend the image a calm, almost static order. Vertical elements—the slender palm trunks and clusters of leaves—only slightly interrupt this stillness while simultaneously stabilizing the spatial structure. In its clarity, the arrangement almost resembles a diagram or a frozen stage set in which every form occupies a precise position.

Painterly, too, Ontani moves far from illusionistic naturalism. The palette is muted, composed of pastel transitions, while the contours are both soft and linear. This technique enhances the impression of an in-between space: the scene appears neither as a realistic landscape nor as a pure fantasy, but rather as an image drawn from a collective, mythological memory.

Within the exhibition, this painting functions as a kind of archetypal point of rest. While the contemporary works of Lucca Cora Süß and Maya Hottarek negotiate transformation as an open, often fragmented process, Ontani presents a body in which this transformation appears to have already been symbolically realized. The work thus acts as a possible echo from another time, one that continues to “become” within the present and its socio-political context.

The contemporary works of Lucca Cora Süß and Maya Hottarek surround this historical piece like two distinct atmospheres. They speak of ambivalent entities that open themselves, of materials that begin to speak, of networks that spread beneath the visible surface. Süß’s work *it dripped and it sparkled and I laughed a wish* consists of an almost ornamental structure that extends downward into a soft, pink form—at once bodily and alien, vulnerable and humorous. The dripping suggested in the title becomes a movement of matter itself: something flows, slips away, resists fixation.

Maya Hottarek’s works operate in similar terrains, yet from a different perspective: less as fragmentation, more as condensation. Her works *Random 1 & 2* point to a fundamental experience of uncertainty, understood not as a deficiency but as a condition.

Thresholds of Becoming is not a place of dwelling, but a moment of passage—a site where past, present, and possible futures briefly overlap before drifting apart again.